

Industrial Relations Department
Monthly Report for January, 1948.

TO: George H. Robinson
Executive Secretary

FROM: Roy E. Harris
Industrial Relations Secretary

Educational Relations
with Employers:

Machinists Project.

Additional negotiations in January with officials of plants, about the assurance of the development of Negro machinists in the northern part of New Jersey began to show tangible results, our real yardstick. Last summer the President of one large plant finally agreed to have some concrete actions take place which would bring about the use of Negroes in machinist categories. However, somewhere between the plant's Industrial Relations Director and some foreman or superintendent, strong undercover opposition threatened to make success impossible, in spite of the long period of discussions. We can happily report, now, that this opposition has been set aside, at least outside the path of the progress of our work. The dawn of success began to appear in January; and as this is written, on Feb. 10, the first Negro is being selected for the program. The significance of this is that there are not a half dozen Negro machinists, employed as machinists I or II in all northern New Jersey. In plants Negroes operate machines, and work as machinists' helpers. A few Negro mechanics are self-employed in small service businesses doing principally automobile repairs, and a larger number work in repair service companies as mechanics. We have now had the first bit of success in a project to get Negroes into the stream of the regular 4 year apprentice machinist channels and in the absence of such channels to be employed as III's, II's or I's according to training and experience.

Newspaper Project. Work was continued to get Negro newspaper reporters included on the regular staff of daily newspapers published in Newark. Developments so far show a spotty reaction, varying from strong, but not so well planned attempts to sidestep intelligent cooperation, to one notable constructive action. We are hoping to break through at this latter point, but find it extremely important to buttress this with other successes in this connection.

Department Store Project. The original arrangements for a committee of three persons to confer with the President of Hahne's Department Store, were cancelled because of inability of all those committee members to keep the appointment arranged. This was after a December appointment had been asked, by the Hahnes official, to be postponed until January. When a third appointment was arranged, our committee assembled in the office of Mrs. S. Parker Griffith, where it was briefed on past developments and details by your Industrial Relations Secretary, Mr. Arnold Harris, Executive Secretary, Jewish Community Relations Committee, Mr. Harold Lett, and Mr. Patrick Philburn. The committee was composed of Mrs. Barkhorn, Mrs. Cornelson, and Mrs. Griffith. Although two of our committee know the Hahne's official personally, he did not keep the appointment with them. Instead he had the Personnel Manager confer with the group. This served to emphasize for our committee the real issue of our problem, that the official is exerting his own personal prejudice on a matter of store policy. Each committee member has resolved to do everything they can, to end the exclusion of Negroes from positions as sales clerks in Hahnes merely because of prejudice. Our high commendation and thanks go to the women of this committee for their efforts so far and for their

resolve and wish to cooperate further at our direction.

N.J.S. Unemployment Compensation Commission We are receiving a significant number of requests from men and women, who, for reasons so far unexplained, have not received their U.C.C. checks. Our investigations show that at some point their claims are held up for indefensibly long periods. These abnormal (and seemingly unnecessary) delays are causing real suffering among claimants involved. The C.I.O. has issued a well-prepared documentation of shortcomings of the present administration of U.C.C. claims. Because of the nature of the cases coming to our office, your Industrial Relations Secretary would like to ask your position with respect to taking some action that might help relieve the problems claimants are now having as a result of not getting their checks which they need.

Plant Investigations We are investigating claims that a very large plant is firing Negro workers "right and left". At this point there appears to be truth in these claims. Some remedy should be found during February.

Community Relations: A committee meeting was called by your Industrial Relations Secretary, and Mrs. Allen P. Ames, co-chairman of the Household Employment Program. Present were Miss Grace Billotti, Passaic Household Employment Program. Y.W.C.A., Mr. Frank Dougherty, Manager, Bloomfield N.J.S.E.S., Mrs. Estelle Thomas, Executive Secretary, Jones St. Branch, Newark Y.W.C.A.; and Mr. John Robinson, representing the press. Two committees have become active and, the Mayor of Bloomfield, N.J. has promised to send a letter to women's club officials and housewives in Bloomfield, Glen Ridge, and Montclair, inviting them to cooperate with this movement to bring about some improvement in the field of household employment. Efforts have also begun in Elizabeth and work is continuing in Passaic. A luncheon meeting was scheduled for February, at which time we will attempt to get the Newark N.J.S.E.S. office to undertake employer-employee education in this connection, during regular contacts.

Industrial Council of Urban Leagues & Similar Agencies. As chairman, your Secretary has coordinated efforts of Urban Leagues and Similar Agencies in northern New Jersey, to make best use of all time on employment problems. The Newark office gets applicants from all over this area, but so far has not been able to refer Newarkers to many jobs outside the immediate Essex County, West Hudson and Eastern Union County area. New Brunswick now is a source of laboring jobs, but the travel schedules are very inconvenient for Newarkers. The Council is continuing its attention to the white collar job field. A uniform application and referral system, and cards, was approved, based on those in use in the N.J.U.L. office. We shall not be asked to print new forms, since your Secretary's revision two years ago will be used by the other agencies with necessary differences of agency identification and program.

Other community cooperation. Your Industrial Relations Secretary represented the N.J.U.L. at the Annual Dinner Meeting of the Boy Scouts of America; he is on its Camping and Activities Committee. Meetings of the Executive Board of the New Jersey Consumers League and of the Labor Committee to Combat

Intolerance were participated in, and innumerable discussions with individuals were developed in connection with our work.

Employment: There is a continued decrease in the number of placements we are able to make. Our placements are still running higher than pre-war levels, but are by no means sufficient to aid the majority of people requesting jobs through our office. The lack of any over-all program of interpretation to the Negro community, leaves the Industrial Relations Secretary exposed to recriminations from persons we aren't able to help. Your Secretary urges the development of some over-all program that can interpret properly, especially to the Negro community, what services this agency is able to render and what we are not staffed to do.

The total number of applicants during January was eighty-seven, fifty females and 37 males including 11 veterans. There were 29 referrals for 19 females and 10 males, including 5 veterans. Eight of the referrals were for full time household employment, 7 for clerical and sales jobs, one for professional work, and all others for unskilled or semi-skilled jobs.

Research. The Secretary is taking a post M.A. course at the New York School of Social Work, entitled Foreign Social Security Systems. From this and a course last quarter entitled, International Social Work, there has come valuable information on social work operation, approaches to specific problems in communities with some problems that are identical to many found in Newark. Relating of experiences of other class members is also helpful insofar as the New York City, northern New Jersey area is concerned.